Lecture

From Norm to Practice: Facing Challenges in Human Rights and Humanitarian Principles in the Field

Speaker : Yoko Akasaka

【Former Head of the Cox's Bazar Office, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)】

Date & Time : Friday, December 11, 11:00 – 12:30

Venue : Kwansei Gakuin University, Kobe Sanda Campus
Building I, Room 201

Organizers : School of Policy Studies Research Society /
Graduate School of Policy Studies Research Consortium

【※This lecture will serve as a make-up class for International Human Rights and Humanitarian Principles(Instructor : Yasuko Shimizu)】

Profile

Ms. Yoko Akasaka served with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for over 28 years. Her final assignment was in Bangladesh, where she served as Principal Situation Coordinator at the UNHCR Sub-Office in Cox's Bazar from December 2022 to July 2025, directing operations for the Rohingya refugee response.

Prior to her assignment in Bangladesh, Ms. Akasaka was the Senior Situation Coordinator at the UNHCR Regional Bureau for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) from November 2019, overseeing the Syria and Iraq situations. Previously, she served as the Deputy Regional Representative for the South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia), based in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Having begun her career with UNHCR in Ukraine in May 1997, Ms. Akasaka has held diverse field positions across Moldova, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Syria. Her extensive portfolio includes serving as Head of Protection in Pakistan, Head of Field Protection in Thailand, Senior Operations Manager in Syria, and Deputy Representative in Tanzania.

Before joining UNHCR, Ms. Akasaka worked with non-governmental organizations in Croatia, the Russian Federation (Chechnya), and Vietnam.

Born in Osaka, Japan, Ms. Akasaka holds a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) from Kansai University and a Master of International Affairs from the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA), Columbia University, New York.

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